



Good Practice Story Title: Nature's Way: Fostering Sustainable Practices and Positive Environmental Impact

Destination: Talisay City, Negros Occidental

Country: Philippine

Submitting Organization: Nature's Village Resort

Category:

- Destination Management
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

Destination description:

Talisay City, located along the picturesque coast of Negros Occidental in the Philippines, is home to Nature's Village Resort (NVR). Set against the background of Mt. Marapara, the resort offers unique accommodations where nature lovers can bask in unspoiled beauty while remaining close to the city. This haven is embraced by lush greenery and surrounded by towering eucalyptus trees, creating a perfect retreat amidst a peaceful environment. At Nature's Village Resort, you are nestled at the heart of business and leisure as it bridges Silay City home to turn-of-the-century ancestral houses of Negros Island and Bacolod City, its capital. However, rapid urbanization has given way to the rise of bustling subdivisions, leading to a growing population. The absence of a proper waste disposal system has resulted in mounting waste in landfills and the pollution of the coastal areas. The burning of cane debris in the nearby sugarcane fields has blanketed the air with toxic carbon emissions, endangering the surrounding communities. Thus, an urgent call for heightened environmental awareness is needed.



Summary of Good Practice Story:

In Negros Occidental, sustainable practices in the tourism industry are often perceived as highly expensive and labor-intensive. NVR has proven otherwise by institutionalizing programs that are good for the environment and business.

NVR's strongest gains have been the reduction of economic leakage by producing compost material through vermiculture, our eco-bricks program, the reduction of electricity bills by installing Solar Panels, and selling excess food waste to local hog growers. NVR also upcycles materials creating decorative fixtures and turning waste into art. NVR champions local communities by hiring and training individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, harnessing their skills, and celebrating our brand of Negrense hospitality.

We recognize Talisay City's problems with pollution and waste management. Thus, reducing our carbon footprint by growing our own vegetables, eradicating the use of single-use plastics, consciously reducing greenhouse gas emissions while saving thousands of liters of water every month are among our strong interventions. We don't leave any stones unturned. This is in NVR's DNA. This is Nature's way.

Issues faced:

Economic Issues:

- Prevalent false belief within the local hospitality industry that sustainable practices are more costly for their businesses.
- Inadequate supply and high cost of power in Negros Island
- High cost of vegetables
- High cost of transporting supplies

Environmental Issues:

- Coastal pollution from lack of proper waste management and dumping of raw sewage into the ocean
- Overflowing landfills
- Burning of nearby sugarcane fields increases air pollution and increases carbon emissions

Social Issues:

- The lack of understanding and concern regarding environmental conservation and sustainable practices leads to harmful behaviors that are detrimental to the environment
- The absence of adequate sustainable livelihoods and job opportunities



Solution: Methods, Steps, and Tools applied:

NVR has prioritized environmental awareness and practices as part of our sustainability commitment since 2009. We established the 5Rs in our hotel operations; *Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & Repurpose*.

NVR launched a comprehensive waste management program involving all staff since proper disposal has been challenging due to limited local waste management options.

- Eco-bricks program. Reduction of single-use plastic by 5,376 kilos every year. The collected eco-bricks are used for garden beds at the resort's organic garden, saving us from buying costly farm materials.
- Vermiculture – food and other organic waste are used to produce compost for our vegetable and herb garden.
- We produce an average of 1000 bins of excess food waste which are sold to local pig growers providing them with nutritious low-cost feed. On average, by using food waste as compost and hog feed, NVR has reduced 104,000 kilograms of carbon emissions from landfill waste
- NVR's Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) treats and purifies wastewater, then used to water non-edible and flowering plants and trees. This reduces reliance on freshwater for irrigation and saves around 480,000 liters of freshwater monthly.
- Reduction of Plastic Pollution: We replaced plastic straws at the restaurant with stainless steel or paper straws and now use biodegradable take-out containers. Refillable glass bottles are used in all hotel rooms and potable water refilling stations are available. Individual shampoo bottles have been replaced with refillable dispensers and biodegradable packaging used for organic bar soaps in our hotel rooms. Per our last tracked data, there has been a 57% decrease in single-use plastic purchases since initiatives were first launched
- Solar Panels installed have resulted in savings of approximately 11,910 kilowatts per month resulting in an estimated annual reduction of 7 tons in carbon emissions
- As part of NVR's repurposing program, teamed up with local artist Ms. Nina Ledesma who designed stunning chandeliers and decorative pieces for the resort using used bottles and soda can tabs.
- Capacitate employees and tourists as advocates. Employees are trained in energy reduction measures and water conservation guidelines and a copy of the tourist's guide for being a responsible traveler can be found in all hotel rooms.





- Prioritize hiring from the local community, offering jobs and training including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Diverse positions across all departments have given locals with varying educational backgrounds opportunities to be gainfully employed.
- Prioritize local suppliers, contractors, local artists, and local consultants in our procurement processes.
- Coordinate with the local fire bureau to report illegal burning of sugarcane fields
- Partner with the City of Talisay in mangrove planting and coastal shoreline clean-up campaigns

Achievements and Results:

Economic

- We have proven that sustainable practices in hotel operations are not only good for the environment but also help to reduce operational costs thereby increasing revenues.
- Installation of solar panels has resulted in a 20-30 % reduction in electricity bills, saving NVR millions of pesos annually.
- Savings of more than P400,000.00 pesos a year from producing our own compost material. Additionally, our farm-to-table practice has not only produced healthier ingredients but has also resulted in financial savings of more than P350,000.00 pesos a year. The resort's organic garden yielded approximately 1,400 kilograms of fresh lettuce annually, along with other vegetables & herbs. In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, we have saved around 65% as compared to conventional procurement.
- Inclusive Economy. We are staunch supporters of local talent. All contractors, artists, and suppliers are from Negros Occidental, thus providing inclusive economic opportunities for our communities.

Social:

- With the accreditations, certifications, and recognitions we have received, we have inspired other hotels in the region by sharing our good practices, thereby influencing more to follow suit.





Environment:

- Raising local champions: Our employees have become advocates. We have created a pool of speakers from among our roster. They have spoken to the City of Bago attendees in Sustainable Accommodation and Homestay Seminar training programs. Local schools like STI University conduct a Hotel Experience Learning Program (**H.E.L.P.**) seminar in line with our sustainable practices.

Key Success Factors:

- Enshrined in our guiding principles, the cooperation and commitment of Nature's Village Resort's management and staff in supporting the "Pollution to Solution" Program done not only within the premises of the hotel but also in our employees' respective homes.
- Education & Engagement: A key success factor has been the constant training of our employees on the importance of sustainability. We have encouraged them to internalize all that they have learned so that it becomes part of their daily routine not just at work but also in their respective homes. As a specific example, an employee earned more than 3000 pesos from selling non-biodegradable scrap to a recycling company because of the recycling principles he learned at Nature's Village.
- Partnering with local providers, hog growers, and organizations enhances the effectiveness and reach of sustainability initiatives while building strong relationships within the community.

Lessons Learned and Advice:

- Nature's Village Resort has proven that sustainability is not only good for the environment but also has positive financial gains.
- Love of Country. Inspiring responsible tourism isn't just about minimizing negative impacts; it's about actively contributing to the well-being of local communities, the environment, and our country.

Recognitions:

- Chosen as one of only three businesses in the Philippines for a case study in sustainability by the Philippine Center for Environmental Protection and Development, Inc. in cooperation with the United Nations Environmental Program Transforming Tourism Value Chains project.
- Gold Seal of Environmental Governance, Provincial Government of Negros Occidental
- Healthy Eating Place Hall of Fame Award from the City of Talisay
- ASEAN Green Hotel Award



- World's Top Ten Eco-Friendly Hotels by international booking website AGODA.

References:

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ASEAN Green Hotel Award:

<https://www.philstar.com/other-sections/the-good-news/2010/03/07/555275/dot-recognizes-rps-asean-green-hotels>

World's Top Ten Eco-Friendly Hotels by AGODA:

<https://www.experiencenegros.com/natures-village-resort-in-negros-occidental-one-of-top-10-eco-friendly-hotels-2012by-agoda-com/>

Nature's Village Resort: Sustainability Practices:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bXVcZ89vq4a0SOFF6j9e9Tjl6nNoFTzn>



